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Conjuring the spectre of authorship: Ethical concerns for studies of higher education in a globalised world (SRHE)

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Conjuring the spectre of authorship

Ethical concerns
for studies of higher education
in a globalised world



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2nd Annual International Symposium on "Higher Education in a Global World"
ATINER 9-12 July 2018, Athens, Greece

My argument

Conjuring the spectre of authorship, considered passé in continental philosophy and contemporary 'western' criticism for some time, may provide a valid and poignant ethical reference point for studies of higher education in a globalised world.

In this paper, it is argued that **the concepts of author, text and reader** allow for a re-consideration of taken-for-granted discourses and interpretative approaches in higher education, particularly for those with academic concerns. Informed by the author's drive to be **responsive to an ethical obligation to the global South** and in contexts with legacies of conflict and inequality, surfacing the politics and problematics of authorship poignantly brings to bear that which is de/legitimised between the gazes of the local, national, global.

The ways in which the concepts of author, text and reader are constructed, and their roles positioned, may enable us to deliberate the sub/text of the macro-, meso- and micro-curricula of higher education in varied contexts, and, in turn, put us in a better position to analyse the significance of what we ourselves design, as such texts operate beyond our own intentionality in the world.

Why the spectre of authorship?

Death of the author

- Sever actual authorial intentionalism from the determination of meaning

Barthes, R., 1968. The death of the author. In J. Caughie, ed. *Theories of authorship: a reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 208–213.



Why the spectre of authorship?

Death of the author

- Sever actual authorial intentionalism from the determination of meaning
- Open the text up to plurality of reader-responses

Bakhtin, M.M., 1981. *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. In M. Holquist, ed. Austin and London: University of Texas Press.

Bal, M., 1999. *Quoting Caravaggio : contemporary art, preposterous history*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J., 1981. *Positions*, Chicago, Ill.: Chicago University Press.

Derrida, J., 1981. *Writing and difference*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.



Why the spectre of authorship?

Death of the author

- Sever actual authorial intentionalism from the determination of meaning
- Open the text up to plurality of reader-responses
- Analyse the way the text figures and operates in context

Fanon, F., 1963. *The wretched of the earth*, New York: Grove Press.

Jardin, A., 2000. Feminist tracks. In S. Burke, ed. *Authorship: from Plato to the postmodern: a reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 178–192.

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Marx, K., 1976. *Preface and introduction to a contribution to the critique of political economy*, Peking: Foreign Language Press. Available at: <http://www.marx2mao.com/M&E/PI.html> [Accessed September 15, 2014].

Spivak, G.C., 1999. *A critique of postcolonial reason*, Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Why the spectre of authorship?

Death of the author

- Sever actual authorial intentionalism from the determination of meaning
- Open the text up to plurality of reader-responses
- Analyse on the way the text figures and operates in context



Why the spectre of authorship?

Consequences...

- Rise of the critic as author-ity
[Rise of assessor as authority over another's text]
- Relinquishes the author of **responsibility** for the reception of meaning*
- Creates potential for re-asserting responsibility within interpretation (& therefore implementation)**

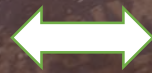
*Ni Fhlathiun, M., 1995. Postcolonialism and the author: the case of Salman Rushdie. In S. Burke, ed. *Authorship: from Plato to the postmodern: a reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 277–284.

** Burke, S., 1992. *The death and return of the author: criticism and subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ethical relations

- Contemporary notions of author – reflexive co-creating/ curating
- Wisdom gained through relational interactions
- Dialogue between espoused, in-use, experienced

Situational/ agential



Collective; Cultural; Structural

Author

Text

Reader



Validity for Studies in Higher Education

- Re-consideration of taken-for-granted discourses & power relations

Re-consider taken-for-granted discourses & power relations

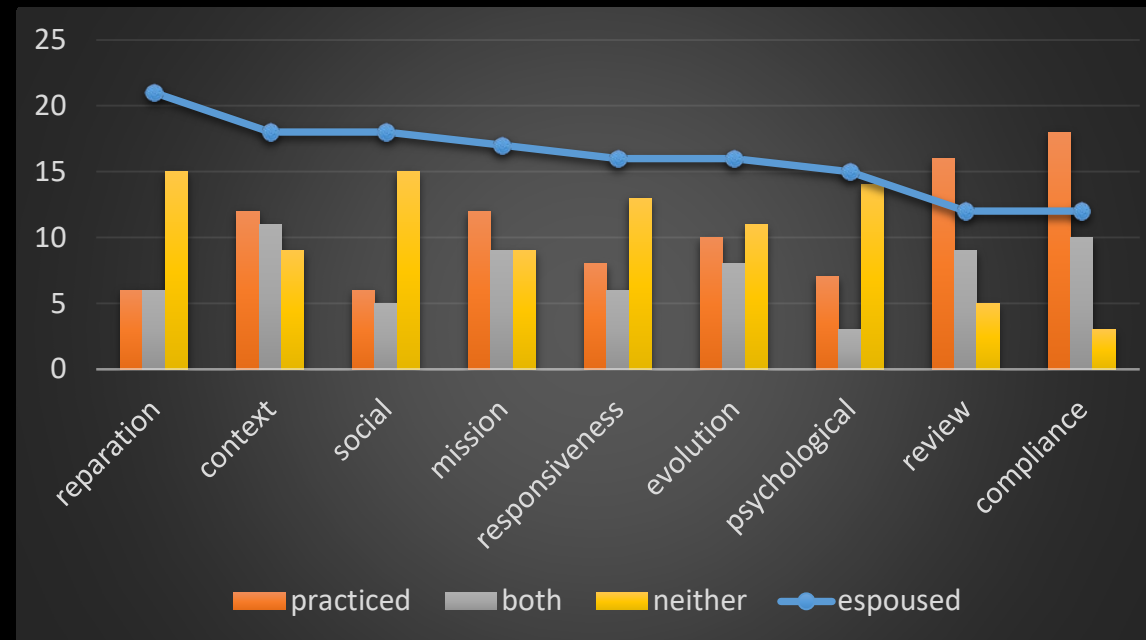


Figure 1. A mapping of notions of transformation prevalent in institutional discourses and how they were experienced by participants

From Belluigi, D. A & Thondlana, G. Submitted for peer review. 'Why mouth all the pieties?' Black and women academics' revelations about discourses of 'transformation' at an historically white South African institution.



Validity for Studies in Higher Education

- Re-consideration of taken-for-granted discourses & power relations
- Unearth tacit interpretative approaches

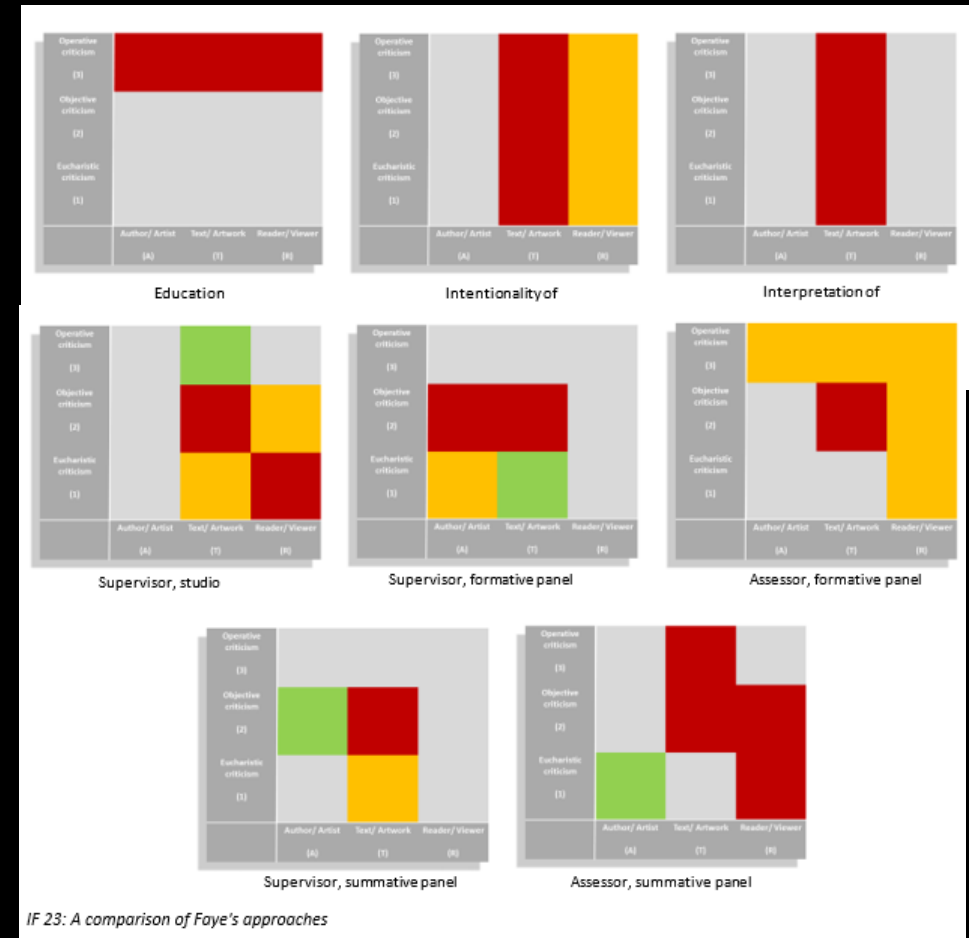
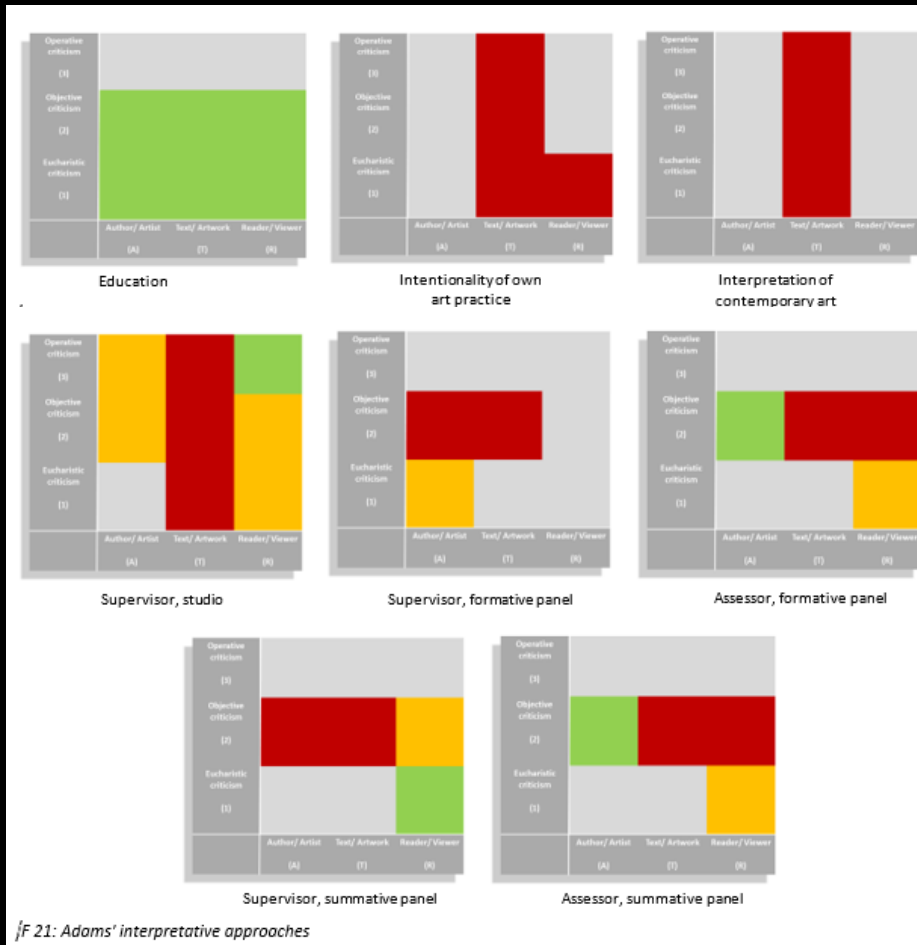
Unearth tacit interpretative approaches

Operative criticism (3)			
Objective criticism (2)			
Eucharistic criticism (1)			
	Author/ Artist (A)	Text/ Artwork (T)	Reader/ Viewer (R)



Belluigi, D. Z. . 2017. "A Framework to Map Approaches to Interpretation." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 51 (3): 91–110.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jaesteduc.51.3.0091>

Micro-curriculum: Interpretative approaches at agential; cultural; structural levels



Implications of the mis-fit between intentionality (curriculum) & reception (assessment practices)

- Belluigi, D. Z. 2018. The importance of critical judgment in uncertain disciplines: A comparative case study of undergraduate fine art visual practice. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education* 17 (3). p.305-322.
doi.org/10.1177/1474022217712641
- ———. 2017. 'La question d'auctorialité : une épine au chapitre de l'évaluation en arts' in Ludec, Diane & Beland, Sebastien. [Eds]. 2017. *Regards sur l'évaluation des Appretissages en Arts à l'Enseignement Supérieur*. Quebec, Presses de l'Université du Québec.
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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1075961>
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- Belluigi, D. Z. (2016). Influences on the struggle over content: considering two fine art studio practice curricula in developing/ed contexts. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21(6), 700-715.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2016.1183617>
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Validity for Studies in Higher Education

- Re-consideration of taken-for-granted discourses & power relations
- Unearth tacit interpretative approaches
- Raise consciousness of complexities of academic agency & responsibility

Situating the author within academic development

- Coming to voice as the authorial self
- Questioning the authority of authorship of curriculum
 - Students as co-authors/ collaborators
 - Excavating subject-ivities of the hidden curricula
- The autonomy of the text – curriculum as autonomous/ intertextual/subject
- Readership as a means towards informed situated criticality and reflexivity

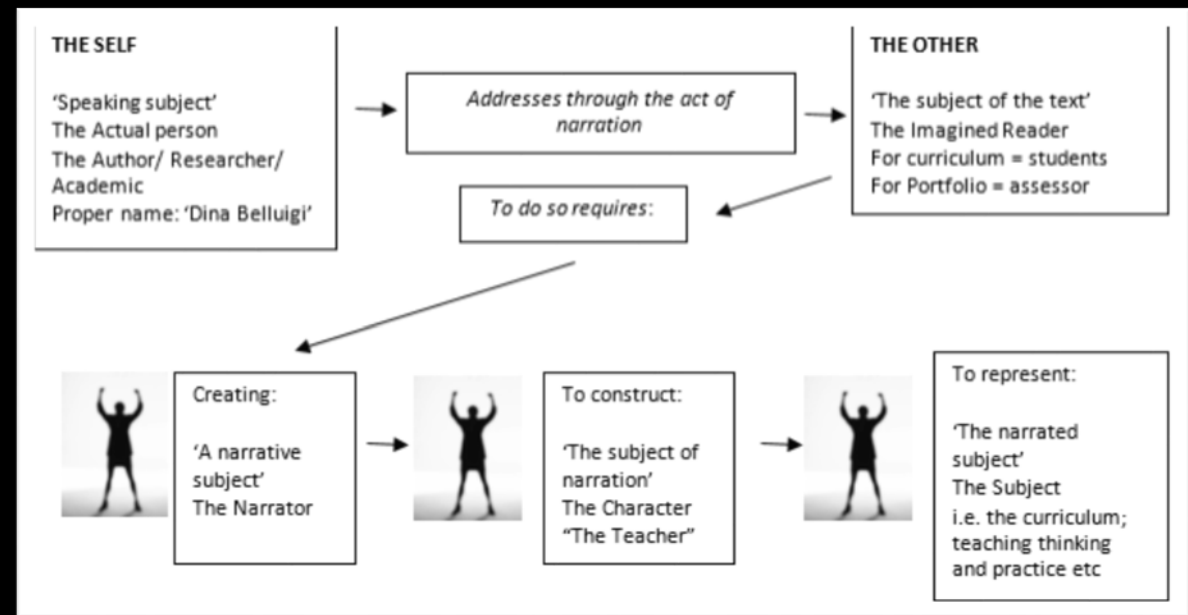
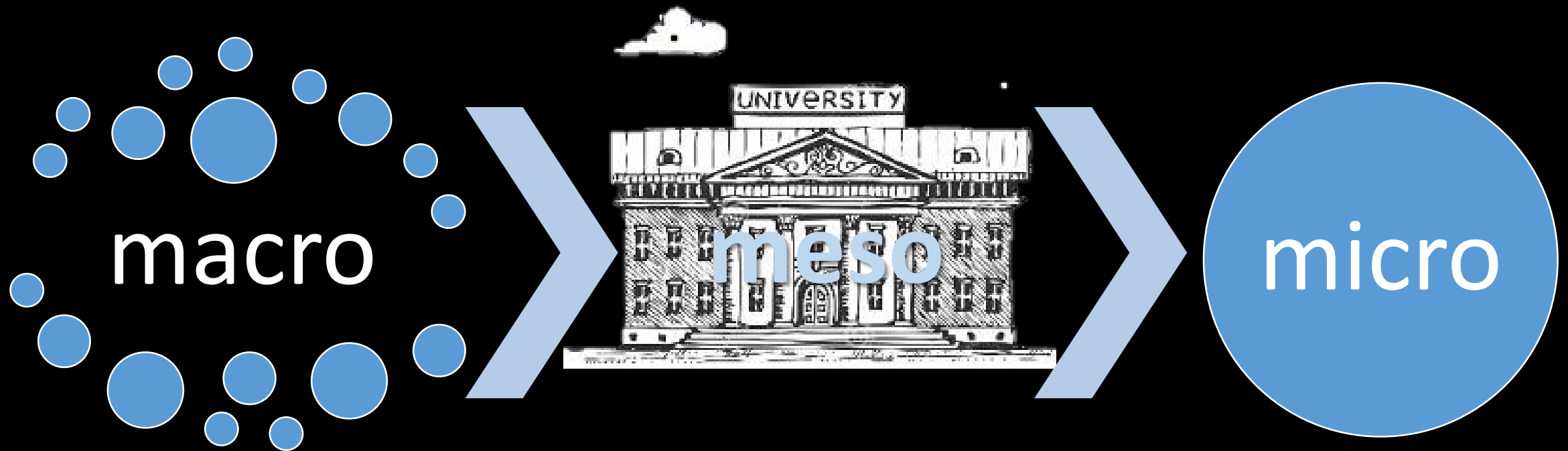


Figure: Unpacking layers of narration of the psycho-social person/ text

Recognising geopolitics, Higher Education's role in **social formation**

The implications for academic agency & for knowledge construction





Validity for Studies in Higher Education

- Re-consideration of taken-for-granted discourses & power relations
- Unearth tacit interpretative approaches
- Raise consciousness of complexities of academic agency & responsibility
- Unearth politics and problematics of authority

Validity for

Ethical obligation to the global South

- Unearth politics and problematics of authority
 - What is de/legitimised in the shifts between the local/national/ global/ commons? 'Geopolitical re/production'
 - The power of the 'proper noun' of institutions [author], The 'figure' of powerful journals [text], The received authority of global ranking systems 'Geopolitical re/presentation'
 - Neutrality of the archive, canon & pedagogies in the face of heterogeneous & indigenous knowledge(s)



- Deliberate the subtext of the macro-, meso-, micro- curriculum
- Curriculum theory & Constructions of Author/ text/ reader
- Emphasis on responsibility

Validity for Studies in Higher Education Ethical obligation to the global South

- What is the significance of y/our design, production and dissemination, recognising that texts operate beyond our own intentionality, in this globalised world?
- Research in, of and for higher education?
- Whose education?
- What is y/our intentionality in this 'field'? What is our responsibility to global I/readership?
- How might such a framework 'work' for Critical Higher Education Studies to trouble the authority of our assuredness in an increasing uncertain world?

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